



Office of Councilmember Nora Campos District Five- East San Jose

AUGUST 2008 NEWSLETTER

Distributing 3,000 REUSABLE Bags



In January 2008, the City Council approved a city ordinance co-sponsored by Mayor Reed, Councilmember Kansan Chu and myself, banning the use of single-use carryout plastic bags in our city. I have not endorsed the use of paper bags because they also have negative effects on the environment, as their production requires the use of enormous amount of energy and numerous trees that are cut down.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that 500 billion to one trillion plastic bags are used worldwide each year, meaning one million plastic bags are used every minute. Twelve million barrels of oil are used to produce these plastic bags. In fact, ten percent of U.S. oil consumption, over 700 million barrels each year, is consumed in order to produce plastic. Marine debris has become a global concern as trash flows with ocean currents and has resulted in floating islands of trash, as is the case of the North Pacific Gyre, which is home to a floating island of trash twice the size of Texas!

In June, I took on a challenge to help curtail the negative impacts of single-use plastic bags by collaborating with various organizations to raise funding to hand out 3,000 reusable bags to residents. I know that it is important to change consumer behavior and raise awareness about the detrimental impacts that single-use carryout plastic bags have on our environment, while making sure that we provide our residents with an alternative to plastic bags. These reusable bags are made from recycled cotton and can be disposed after the life-span of the bag without any environmental concerns. It is also important to note that there are some types of reusable bags that are made from materials that are actually harmful to the environment and cannot be recycled when they become obsolete.

Our goal is to foster a comprehensive shift in consumer behavior towards the use of reusable carry-out bags, decrease the amount of single use plastic and paper bags used each year, decrease the amount of these bags which end up in San José landfills, and decrease the amount of bags littered throughout the City of San José and the waterways which flow through our city.

The reusable bags will be distributed to families free-of-charge at the 2008 National Night Out event on August 5th at Emma Prusch Park on the corner of Story Rd. and King Rd.

National Night Out 25th Anniversary

On Tuesday, August 5th, neighbors across the country will be celebrating the 25th Anniversary of National Night Out, an event that takes place each year on the first Tuesday in August. National Night Out was introduced by the National Association of Town Watch, a crime prevention organization that works with law enforcement agencies and crime watch groups.



I want to thank the District Five residents who will be hosting a National Night Out event. These events are a great opportunity for neighbors to get to know each other and to send a strong message that we will stand up for our community and take back our neighborhoods. Last year, we saw a significant increase in gang-related violence and an alarming homicide rate, 36 homicides, the highest in a decade. The police department cannot solve all of our problems, so it is important for us, the community, to help by participating in our neighborhoods associations, Strong Neighborhoods Initiative Neighborhood Action Committees (NAC), neighborhood watch, or by reporting suspicious activity to 9-1-1, 3-1-1(non-emergency), or (408) 277-8911.

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**Alum Rock Youth Center
Advisory Committee
4th Annual Comedy Fundraiser
Friday, August 15, 2008
7:00 p.m.
Admission \$35
Mexican Heritage Plaza
(Alum Rock Ave./ King Rd.)
Contact: (408) 251-2850**

**Alum Rock Village
San José Salsa Festival
Saturday, August 23, 2008
12:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Admission FREE
Alum Rock Avenue
(White Rd. /Manning-Millar Aves)
Contact: (408) 795-1853**



Mexican Heritage Plaza: The Transition



In April, the City Council approved a process to create a new, sustainable business plan for the Mexican Heritage Plaza so it may be a cultural arts center. The business plan is targeted for completion at the end of June 2009, and until then, the City will be responsible for the maintenance, utilities and event services at the Plaza. The task of developing a business plan falls upon a 13-member Steering Committee to be selected by the Plaza's Interim Membership-based Advisory Committee, 2 Eastside community groups, the Arts Commission and the City Council.

I strongly encourage the community to participate in the process of re-envisioning the operating model of the Plaza through two venues:

- On the Plaza homepage, <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/mexicanheritageplaza>, on the right hand menu, community members can click on "Plaza Membership Pledge," and either pledge volunteer hours or a monetary donation. Community members pledging their support automatically become members of the Interim Membership-based Advisory Committee, a body that will vote on six of their own members to hold positions on the Steering Committee.
- Nominations for the Steering Committee can also be submitted via the website. To access more information on the nomination process click on the "Business Planning Process" link on the right hand side of the Plaza's homepage.

For further information or questions regarding the transition, please contact Elisa Echeverria at (408) 928-5554 or elisa.echeverria@sanjoseca.gov.